

# BAY AREA PROJECT

## **FUTURES PLANNING TEAM**

### FINAL REPORT

OCTOBER 2003

## **FUTURES PLANNING TEAM MEMBERS**

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Agnews Development Center

San Andreas Regional Center

Regional Center of East Bay

Golden Gate Regional Center

Regional Project of Bay Area

Agnews Developmental Center

Regional Center of East Bay

Parent

Regional Project of Bay Area

San Andreas Regional Center

Golden Gate Regional Center

Representative—Association for the  
Mentally Retarded at Agnews

Area Board V

Contra Costa DD Council

Alameda County DD Council

Area Board VII

Delta Regional Project

Agnews Developmental Center

Relative

Protection & Advocacy, Inc.

Parent

Agnews Developmental Center

Imagine Supported Living Services

Parent

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## **FUTURES PLANNING TEAM CHARGE**

Develop and implement a person-centered planning process that will result in the identification of a preferred future for each Agnews Developmental Center (Agnews) resident. Receive and analyze information from the interdisciplinary teams (IDT). Develop and monitor transition plans for each person.

## **VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

We are guided by **respect and honor** for each person's needs and preferences. Therefore, we assure for each individual the following:

1. There are no shortcuts. Whether transitioning to the community or another developmental center, planning is individually oriented.
2. Consumers/families/advocates participate in transition planning to the maximum extent possible. Their preferences should be documented in their Individual Program Plan (IPP).
3. An individualized transition meeting, Community Living Options meeting, that includes familiar staff, is held for each person.
4. The individual and his/her needs drive the type, number, and duration of transition activities. (Transitioning from a developmental center can take an average 30-60 days depending upon the needs of the individual.)
5. Choices will be available to each individual in all areas of their life.
6. The future staff provider will spend time with each individual at Agnews, getting to know their program and routine.
7. Everyone visits their new home before they move.
8. Familiar staff accompanies each individual for training and transition.
9. We recognize that not all preferences will be reflected in the available options. Every effort will be made to present options that reflect as closely as possible to each individual's preferences and to honor those preferences to the maximum extent possible.
10. Unique and individualized items and equipment, including those considered facility property, is identified and moves with the individual.
11. Providers are fiscally-compensated for additional transition costs. (Costs to the provider, during the time between identification of the home and placement, including, but not limited to, staff compensation during training and transition activities.)

## **SUMMARY OF TEAM PROCESS**

The Futures Planning Team first met on February 6, 2003. Over the next month, the initial core group, comprised of members from three regional centers, Regional Project of the Bay Area (RPBA) staff, a parent, and Agnews' staff, continued to meet a total of six times. A complete review and evaluation of all existing assessment documents and policies regarding Individual Program Planning as submitted by the three regional centers and Agnews, was undertaken. After some very long and involved discussions totaling nearly 18 hours, the group extrapolated the most significant items from these various documents and developed two forms that could be utilized in gathering consumer specific data as follows:

- I. Review of Needs; and
- II. Review of Living Arrangements and Preferences

Together, these two forms comprise the Futures Planning Process Worksheet (see Attachment 13 of the Agnews Closure Plan).

The "Review of Needs" information focused on areas such as basic identifying information, family/advocate, legal status, health and medical services, special behavioral and safety needs, mobility issues, communication, and activities of daily living. Over the next six months, this information was compiled by Agnews' staff from existing professional assessments available in the clinical record. The data collection process was completed August 2003.

It was determined that a series of ongoing dialogues amongst those people who are most significant in the life of each individual served would be the best way to capture the information for the "Preferences" portion of the Futures Planning Process Worksheet. This was a collaborative effort between the consumer, their family/friends/advocate, a liaison from the appropriate regional center, and Agnews staff—typically the social worker. These dialogues occurred outside the Individual Program Planning process and were meant to glean preliminary data. Each of the three primary regional centers: San Andreas, Golden Gate, and East Bay, committed additional staff resources to this effort. All involved staff was provided with an initial training session on March 17, 2003, to ensure the right players participated and the right approach was utilized in this process. Two months later, a follow-up session was held on May 19, 2003, to discuss how the process was coming along, and troubleshoot issues and unique situations. Beyond simply gathering data, this process helped to build a foundation of trust and formed the basis for a new/improved relationship amongst various stakeholders.

This portion of the Futures Planning Process Worksheet deals with those wishes and dreams of consumers and their families. It was important that their voices be heard and information documented with regard to their preferences. Thus, an open-ended discussion of such areas as preferences (with regard to living arrangements, relationships, roommates, access to community resources ranging from medical services to recreational opportunities, location, job goals, educational needs, etc.), occurred. This was just to begin the dialogue. It was not intended to determine final choices, which may occur at a later date through the traditional Individual Program Planning process, but to prepare people's minds for contemplating what is most important to them and what might be possible.

What has ultimately resulted from the completion of the Futures Planning Process Worksheet is the development of a preliminary database, maintained in the RPBA offices at Agnews. This database has the capacity to sort and portray data in a myriad of ways, including but not limited to: medical needs, communication, behavior issues, geographic concerns, community resources, regional center, work programs, etc. It can also sort by multiple items, providing the Community Development Team with direction as they begin their work on a regional level to further improve the service delivery system to individuals with developmental disabilities.

It is important to emphasize again that this process does not substitute for the IPP and/or Community Living Options meetings, which will continue to occur to enable individuals, their families/advocates, etc., to make definite decisions when placement activities are already underway.

Additionally, the Futures Planning Team took on the tasks of education of consumers and families, supporting people through the challenges of transfers/transitions, and the development of a monitoring process to evaluate the efficacy of the outcome of those transitions. Three sub-groups of the Futures Planning Team are developing the plans for these areas. Much of this activity is still in the development stage and will be captured in the recommendations portion of this report, but a quick summary of their aims should suffice to describe their missions.

As part of educational activities, family members and consumers, alike, are afforded the opportunity to visit various community homes. Further, Agnews has the first of three "Agnews Alumni Socials" planned for September 25, 2004. The goal of these meetings is to offer information about community living in an environment that is safe and fun. People who previously lived at Agnews have been invited back to present information and show a video that details their day-to-day lives. For people currently living at Agnews, there will be a chance to ask questions of those who have experienced a major change in their home environment, and how it is different, and what they might expect.

To prepare for that transition, the subgroup for this task plans to provide training to Agnews' staff and future care providers. Some of their anticipated topic areas are: how to recognize and minimize transfer trauma, stress reduction, how to identify and understand the strengths that staff can bring to a successful transition, identifying and addressing non-verbal responses, and the development of a transition-monitoring tool.

It is anticipated that this transition tool will be incorporated into the Individual Program Planning process in the coming year and be updated at all subsequent team meetings. It is likely to include items from the Futures Planning Process Worksheet, as well as those areas—both tangible and non-tangible—which are essential to a successful transition. As new living and service options are in the process of being planned for and developed, this will allow the consumers and their families to begin the narrowing down process toward more concrete decisions and identifying priorities of those factors that are most significant to them. This will also give them an opportunity to influence the development of those homes and services in the community (through their input at the IPP), assuring that the very specific and individualized needs of their family members are addressed prior to placement.

The monitoring component is intended to evaluate the efficacy of the outcome of transition plans. This is not intended to overlap with existing monitoring activities already established and occurring on the part of regional center case managers and RPBA staff. Rather, it will be an assessment to determine on which preferred items, services, supports, etc. our process succeeded in providing the consumer with his/her desired outcomes, and how many were we able to do so for each individual. It is anticipated that the transition tool would be utilized one final time at the 30-day meeting after placement, to determine whether or not the transition process was successful in providing the individual with their identified needs and preferences as determined in their IPP.

## **SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Development of trust and a cooperative spirit amongst all stakeholders.
2. Completion of discussions regarding an individual's preferences one person at a time, case by case.
3. Development of a database to capture and depict congregate data regarding individual needs and preferences.
4. Develop and implement a Quality Assurance (QA) process with families/relatives having experienced preliminary "Futures" discussions.
5. Education of consumers and their families/advocates regarding futures planning resources, providing an opportunity to make informed choices.

6. The development of a Comprehensive Training Curriculum for Agnews and community care providers regarding the recognition and mitigation of the issues surrounding the transition process.
7. Completion of a transition tool to be utilized in conjunction with Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) meetings to capture needs and preferences, both tangible and non-tangible; and to be utilized as well to audit the efficacy of the transition plan.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**Goal 1**—Education of consumers and their families/advocates regarding futures planning resources:

1. Create a packet of information detailing current community service options and regional center responsibilities.
2. Create a packet of information detailing future options for people with developmental disabilities living in the community.
3. Host a parent panel, open to all families, possibly at an AMRA meeting. The focus will be to highlight positive transitions into the community.
4. Create an “Information Center” at Agnews which will include materials, meeting announcements, and brochures about community living.
5. Continue to offer “Agnews Alumni Socials.”
6. After the Socials, print a picture of the consumer and a brief history in the “New Beginnings” newsletter.
7. Continue community services tours, publicizing them in the “New Beginnings” newsletter and at the Information Center.
8. Highlight community providers in the “New Beginnings” newsletter.
9. Continue to offer tours of community living environments to parents/families through AMRA, RPBA, regional center liaisons, or via contact with Agnews’ social workers.

**Goal 2**—Completion of a QA process with families/relatives having experienced “Futures” discussions.

Parent member of the Futures Planning Team to contact random sample of relatives who have undergone the process and receive feedback as to what worked, what didn’t, and what could be done to improve the process.

**Goal 3—**The development of a Comprehensive Training Curriculum for Agnews and community care providers regarding how to recognize, minimize and prevent transition traumas.

1. Transition Committee to establish curriculum including but not limited to the following:
  - a. How to identify and understand the strengths and gifts that individual staff can bring to a successful transition.
  - b. Stress reduction for both staff and consumers, bringing and keeping a balance in life.
  - c. Identifying and addressing nonverbal responses.
  - d. Use, benefits, and implementation of the transition-monitoring tool.
2. Identify/recruit consultant with expertise in the area of transition trauma issues.
3. Hold two Focus Groups with direct care staff for input on the “Transition Tips” and the tool to monitor the integrity of the transition.
4. Develop a laminated brochure on “Transition Tips.”

**Goal 4—**The development of a transition/monitoring tool to be used as a living document to identify needs and preferences, in conjunction with the IDT, which are important to the consumer. This document will be embedded in the transition plan, as part of the IPP, to ensure a smooth process. This tool will also be utilized to audit the outcome for those people who have moved to the community to determine the efficacy of the transition plan at the time of their 30-day meeting.

1. Develop a tool (in conjunction with the Monitoring Subcommittee) that will identify “tangibles” and “non-tangibles” which are important to the consumer, that will be embedded in the IPP, to enhance a positive transition.
2. Train IDTs in the use and purpose of this tool in conjunction with the IPP process.
3. Ongoing support at team meetings to the consumer and other team members as they begin to narrow the focus and begin to make more definitive decisions regarding the person’s needs and preferences, the prioritization of these desires, and accurate documentation of this.
4. Through the person-centered process at IDT meetings, assist the person and their family in making educated decisions, through information about what is currently available, what is being proposed, and what other possibilities may exist.



5. Periodic spot checking of this process and resultant documentation by identified Agnews, RPBA, and regional center staff to identify trends, patterns, etc. and communication with the Community Development Team.
6. RPBA to design a new database to capture the data mentioned above and update regularly, as team meetings occur and more definitive decisions are made.
7. RPBA to input data at the time of the 30-day meeting after placement, and provide reports to the QA Group regarding efficacy of the outcome of the transition plan.

## **BARRIERS AND RESOLUTIONS**

**Barrier 1:** Many consumers currently living in the community do not work, or those placed must wait for a job to be provided.

**Resolution:** *We must create jobs in the community through partnerships with businesses for individuals who wish to work and be paid.*

**Barrier 2:** Individuals who do work make less money than while at Agnews.

**Resolution:** *Need to adjust for this if possible, or prepare consumers for the likelihood of less take-home pay.*

**Barrier 3:** Typically, community service providers receive financial reimbursement only after the individual has been placed.

**Resolution:** *Providers and their staff should be fiscally compensated while the transition process is occurring.*

**Barrier 4:** Current state law does not allow for the transfer of specialized equipment, materials, and furniture to be transferred with the individual as they leave Agnews.

**Resolution:** *Create/revise policy to ensure individuals who do leave Agnews may do so with all necessary specialized equipment, materials, furniture, etc.*

**Barrier 5:** There is no method to inform consumers/families of all existing housing options or concepts for possible housing options in the future, hindering informed decision-making.

**Resolution:** *Educational processes underway by the Futures Planning Team address these issues (see Goal #1 above).*

**Barrier 6:** Currently, there is no provision for having locked environments in the community for individuals with special behavior needs whose personal safety requires this type of structure.

**Resolution:** *Revise regulations as necessary to permit locked community homes.*

**Barrier 7:** QA mechanisms are fragmented. Department of Health Services, regional centers, RPBA, Agnews, etc. all have various processes. There is no database maintained for all this information, routine feedback to providers, process for loop closure, or method for reviewing systemwide issues and taking corrective measures for the entire service delivery system to improve the overall quality of services.

**Resolution 1:** *RPBA to develop database regarding transition and outcome data as outlined in Goal #4 above.*

**Resolution 2:** *QA Sub-Group of the Community Development Team to review data and develop system to address feedback, loop closure, and corrective measures on a systemwide basis to enhance service delivery.*